

**COMPLETE
COLLEGE
AMERICA**

**AI READINESS
CONSORTIUM**

CCA AI Readiness Consortium RFP

Call for Institutional Partners

- **Application Deadline: September 30, 2024**
Program Duration: October 2024 to December 2025

About the consortium

Complete College America (CCA) and Riipen are excited to announce a transformative initiative aimed at integrating AI education and work-based learning into higher education curricula. We are seeking 5 forward-thinking community colleges to join this groundbreaking project.

With the widespread implications of generative AI disruption on the workforce, especially to at-risk and underserved populations, it is critical that institutions of higher education respond proactively, scale quickly, and connect AI expertise and business needs across the country to produce AI programming that positively impacts individuals' career outcomes and economic growth.

In the backdrop of the current work environment, the advent of generative artificial intelligence (AI) applications has further increased the need for experiential learning opportunities, accelerating the demand for new technical skills in the United States economy and workforce and promising to change the face of the future of work.

Consortium goals

- Broaden equitable access to experiential learning opportunities in a cost-effective and scalable way.
- Utilize employer-integrated project-based experiential learning as a proven vehicle to increase student success and provide skills for learners to be responsive to a disrupted labor economy.
- Through experiential learning opportunities, embed artificial intelligence education competencies into community college academic programs to provide needed skills for the most at-risk workers in industries/roles that will be disrupted by AI technology. Participants will learn skills needed now to secure roles that increase economic and social mobility today and into the future.
- Provide community colleges experiential learning tools and resources to innovate academic skill mastery and become responsive to quickly changing workforce needs.

CCA's partner in this work is Riipen, an experiential learning platform and work-based learning marketplace that connects students with real-world projects and employers. The fully funded CCA AI Readiness Consortium is generously supported by Axim Collaborative, allowing for no additional cost to institutions, faculty members, or students.

About Riipen

Riipen facilitates collaboration between institutions of higher education and employers, working with over 500 colleges and universities and over 25,000 employers in North America. Its platform enables faculty members to embed real-world, employer-designed projects into the curriculum. Institutions create program pages that describe the work-based learning projects they are seeking and the commitment that they require from employers, and employers propose projects for students to work on. The projects are highly customizable, so that they may be adapted to the needs of specific students and courses. Faculty members may also invite their own employer partners to work with their students through the platform. Instructors then integrate these virtual projects, which can be individual or team-based, into their courses.

Faculty members collaborate with employers to ensure projects are authentic learning experiences that are well-integrated into the curriculum and include an AI-component to complete the project. Riipen evaluates employers thoroughly to ensure they enter these relationships ready to mentor students and provide the extensive feedback that makes work-based learning experiences rewarding for students. Learn more at www.riipen.com

Benefits

- For your students— real-world, work-based learning opportunities that will enhance their AI competency skills and their future career prospects.
- For your faculty members— effective professional development, a community of peers, and access to industry partners around the world.
- For your institution— an innovative way to build institutional capacity for cutting edge AI-skill development, career preparation and assessment of student outcomes.

Requirements for participating institutions

Assembling a team is described below.

- ▶ Collaborative engagement in developing AI-focused experiential learning competencies in partnership with CCA and employers that authentically assesses student learning and skill mastery.

This will be through focus groups, working sessions (potentially online and locally in-person) with Complete College America, local employers, and Riipen staff, and larger convenings with all program participants to complete the following:

- a. Data planning
 - b. Employer outreach and engagement
 - c. Competency mapping
 - d. Academic alignment, course design, development, execution, and continuous improvement
- ▶ Integrate AI-focused work-based learning components into courses using the Riipen platform.
 - ▶ Offer these courses at least once in the spring 2025 and once in the fall 2025 semester.
 - ▶ Collaborate on course development, revision, and implementation over the pilot period.
 - ▶ Revise courses based on student evaluations and industry feedback.
 - ▶ Participate in a series of webinars and training sessions developed by CCA and Riipen.
 - ▶ Actively engage in the national community of practice.
 - ▶ Participate in the evaluation component of the program by measuring or completing the following and submitting this data to Complete College America:
 - a. Retention data from Fall 2024 to Fall 2025 semester for program learners.
 - b. Program completion data for program learners, including participants that complete after the pilot program ends.

- c. The institution's current academic assessment model needs to be embedded in any courses in this pilot project to measure the impact on student learning, and the aggregated data for each course provided to Complete College America.
- d. An action plan submitted in Spring 2025 that details how the institution will sustain the program beyond the funding period, and will report quarterly during the pilot program on the status of the action plan to sustain the program beyond the pilot.
- e. Additionally, participating faculty will encourage students to complete the Riipen platform pre- and post-experience surveys in support of the program impact reporting.

How the WBL Consortium Works

- ▶ Each selected institution will form a dynamic team consisting of:
 - 5 full-time faculty members from diverse disciplines
 - A career services or workforce alignment / readiness executive
 - The chief academic officer or equivalent senior administrator
- ▶ Faculty, career services teams, and employers will engage in developing AI-focused experiential learning competencies that authentically assesses student learning and skill mastery.
- ▶ Faculty champions will be tasked with integrating AI-focused work-based learning projects into new or existing courses.
- ▶ During the first six months of the project all team members will participate in a series of webinars developed and offered by the Riipen staff. These webinars will introduce team members to the Riipen platform and provide detailed guidance on how to integrate work-based learning projects with industry partners into existing or new courses.

- ▶ Participating colleges will offer course at least once during each of the next two academic years, starting in Spring 2025.
- ▶ The career services professional and academic officer will play crucial roles in aligning AI work-based learning projects with broader curricular goals and career preparation activities.
- ▶ All team members will actively participate in evaluating the project's success and impact on student outcomes and economic mobility.

CCA and Riipen support for members

CCA and Riipen will support campus-based work:

Resources and Support

Participating institutions will receive a comprehensive support package:

- Free access to Riipen's cutting-edge work-based learning platform
- Intensive training in integrating AI-focused work-based learning into curricula
- Participation in a vibrant virtual community of practice coordinated by CCA
- Financial support for project evaluation (\$5000) and faculty stipends (\$1000 for each of the five faculty members)
- Access to CCA's proven strategies for student success and completion

There will be no additional cost to institutions, faculty members, or students during the project.

Selection Criteria

CCA seeks to attract a diverse cohort of member institutions to the AI Readiness Consortium. Selection priority will be given to institutions that serve (or seek to serve) students who have historically faced barriers to participating in traditional internships. This includes first-generation students, low-income students, students of color, and students who attend institutions in rural areas.

Other selection criteria include:

- ▶ **Community Colleges:** recognizing the critical role community colleges play in serving traditionally underserved learners, this program is open only to community colleges in the United States.
- ▶ **Institutional capacity.** Community colleges in the Consortium should be able to devote resources and staffing to a multi-year pilot project. This may be demonstrated through the identification of a diverse team which can support the project, institutional resource availability to support data collection and analysis, and commitment to achieving the goals of the consortium program.
- ▶ **Strong project leadership.** The faculty champions nominated for the program should be professors dedicated to cutting-edge curriculum in their craft; the career services / workforce alignment executive should hold a senior role and have extensive experience in helping students prepare for careers.
- ▶ **Compatibility with implementing AI education & work-based learning content.** Selected institutions should demonstrate a compelling match between proposed courses and the kinds of work-based learning opportunities that are already offered through the Riipen project marketplace. (We strongly encourage you to explore the marketplace before preparing an application.)

Each application will be reviewed individually and holistically by CCA.

Project Timeline

September 30, 2024	Application deadline
October 30, 2024	Selection of participating institutions
January 2025	Launch of community of practice
Spring 2025	Take part in collaborations to develop AI experiential learning competencies with employers, and AI expert consultants
Spring 2025	Intensive training of faculty champions on the Riipen platform and course design
Summer 2025 through Fall 2025	First round of work-based learning (WBL) course
Fall 2025 through Spring 2026	The community of practice discusses evaluation results from the first round of courses. Campus teams assess the first round of courses from their institutions and begin making revisions. The external evaluator collects data on WBL courses and controls courses at the institutions
Fall 2025	Second round of WBL courses
Spring 2026	Final evaluation activities (institutions submit data to CCA, CCA conducts evaluation)

How to apply

Applications must be submitted online. You can access the [application form here](#).

The application deadline is September 30, 2024.

Applicants will respond to the following questions:

To help us understand your institution's profile and eligibility, please begin by answering the following brief, factual questions about your institution and your role.

1. Name of institution:
2. Name of submitter:
3. Submitter's title:
4. Submitter's email address:
5. Institution type (select all that apply): Community College Minority-Serving Institution Broad-Access Four-Year College/University Other (please specify)
6. Total student enrollment:
7. Percentage of students from underrepresented groups:
8. Does your institution have existing AI-related programs? (Yes/No)
9. Has your institution participated in work-based learning initiatives before? (Yes/No)

Now that we have some basic information, we'd like to learn more about your institution's vision, capacity, and commitment to this initiative. Please provide detailed responses to the following questions.

- Describe your institution's commitment to inclusivity and ensuring equitable access to strong academic programs that lead to promising careers. How will you inclusively recruit students and faculty for this initiative?
- Please outline your institution's vision for integrating AI education and work-based learning into your curriculum. Which specific programs and courses would you use or develop for this initiative? How does this align with your broader institutional goals and strategic plans?

- Identify the key team members who would be involved in this initiative, including their names, roles, and departments and a short bio highlighting their expertise to serve on this project. What data and assessment support can you provide for this project?
- Describe your institution's current approach to work-based learning. What experience do you have with credit for competency models? How do you envision implementing or expanding these approaches?
- Detail the local or regional industries and specific employers that you believe would be ideal partners for AI-focused work-based learning projects. Include information on the size and growth of these sectors in your region.
- Explain your institution's current processes for introducing, modifying, and reviewing academic programs and courses. How will these processes support or challenge the implementation of this initiative?
- Describe any unique challenges your institution faces in implementing AI education and work-based learning, and how you plan to address these challenges. How do you anticipate this program will benefit your students, particularly those from underserved populations?
- How do you envision sustaining and expanding this initiative beyond the initial two-year timeframe? What long-term impact do you hope to achieve, and how does this align with your institution's key performance indicators for post-completion outcomes?
- Please provide a list of the five courses that will be revised (or created) to incorporate a work-based learning component. This can be a tentative list.
- Please include a short course summary with information on the discipline, where the course fits into the overall program curriculum, and any previous work-based learning elements incorporated into the course.
- Please upload a letter from the college president, vice president, or designee that commits the institution to provide resources and support to the program including integrating work-based learning into courses and the project evaluation requirements.
- Please provide any further information we could consider in your application.

If selected, institutions will be required to share current CVs for all team members, as well as details about current efforts and data (if any) to track the career success of your recent graduates.

For more information about the project or the selection criteria, please contact Charles Ansell, Vice President – Research, Policy and Advocacy at cansell@completecollege.org